

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for inhibiting fungi on and in plant tissues, comprising:

applying a principal fungi-inhibitor and a metal to seeds or tubers for a plant prior to planting or to roots, foliage, flowers or fruit of a plant after planting, said principal fungi-inhibitor an aqueous solution including a fungi-inhibiting component consisting of at least one plant hormone, said at least one plant hormone including a synthetic auxin selected from the group consisting of indole propionic acid, indole-3-butyric acid, phenylacetic acid, naphthalene acetic acid (NAA), 2,4-dichlorophenoxy acetic acid, 4-chloroindole-3-acetic acid, 2,4,5-trichlorophenoxy acetic acid, 2-methyl-4-chlorophenoxy acetic acid, 2,3,6-trichlorobenzoic acid, 2,4,6-trichlorobenzoic acid, 4-amino-3,4,5-trichloropicolinic acid and mixtures thereof, together with a said metal selected from the group consisting of alkaline earth metals, transition metals and mixtures thereof, said auxin applied in an amount effective to inhibit fungi growth of harmful organisms causing said disease but wherein said amount is insufficient to negatively effect growth of said plant tissues.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein said synthetic auxin is indole-3-butyric acid.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein said synthetic auxin is applied in combination with indole-3-acetic acid.

7. (Original) The method of Claim 6 wherein said synthetic auxin is indole-3-butyrlic acid.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein said auxin is applied to seeds or tubers at a rate of about 0.0028 to about 0.028 gm auxin/100 kg seed weight.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein said auxin is applied to bean seeds at a rate of about 0.0028 to about 0.028 gm auxin/100 kg seed weight.

10. (Original) The method of Claim 9 wherein said auxin is applied at a rate of about 0.016 to about 0.112 gm auxin/100 kg seed weight.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein said auxin is applied to potato seed pieces at a rate to result in about 0.0125 to about 2.8 gm auxin/hectare of planted pieces.

12. (Original) The method of Claim 11 wherein said auxin is applied at a rate to result in about 0.125 to about 0.28 gm auxin/hectare of planted pieces.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein said auxin is applied to the roots, foliage, flowers or fruit of plants at a rate of about 0.0002 to about 0.06 gm auxin/hectare/day.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Cancelled)

16. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein said metal is selected from the group consisting of calcium, zinc, copper, manganese and mixtures thereof.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein said metal is present in said solution in a range of about 0.001 to about 5.0 percent-by-weight.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein said auxin principal fungi-inhibitor and said metal are applied by spraying said seeds or tubers with an aqueous solution of said auxin principal fungi-inhibitor and said metal or by immersing said seeds or tubers in an aqueous solution of said auxin principal fungi-inhibitor and said metal.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein said fungi are selected from the group consisting of the *Fusarium*, *Rhizoctonia*, *Pythium* and *Phytophthora* families and mixtures thereof.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein said plants are crop plants selected from the group consisting of dry beans, soybeans, onions, corn, cotton, potatoes and mixtures thereof.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Currently Amended) A method for inhibiting fungi on and in plant tissues, comprising:

manipulating the level of auxin in said plant tissues by applying a principal fungi-inhibitor and a metal to seeds or tubers for a plant prior to planting or to roots, foliage, flowers or fruit of a plant after planting, said principal fungi-inhibitor an aqueous solution including a fungi-inhibiting component consisting of being at least one plant hormone, said at least one plant hormone including a synthetic auxin, together with a said metal selected from the group consisting of calcium, zinc, copper, manganese and mixtures thereof, said auxin applied in an

amount effective to adjust the auxin in said plant tissues to a level sufficient to inhibit growth of said fungi but wherein said level is insufficient to negatively effect growth of said plant tissues.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 25 wherein said synthetic auxin is selected from the group consisting of indole propionic acid, indole-3-butyric acid, phenylacetic acid, naphthalene acetic acid (NAA), 2,4-dichlorophenoxy acetic acid, 4-chloroindole-3-acetic acid, 2,4,5-trichlorophenoxy acetic acid, 2-methyl-4-chlorophenoxy acetic acid, 2,3,6-trichlorobenzoic acid, 2,4,6-trichlorobenzoic acid, 4-amino-3,4,5-trichloropicolinic acid and mixtures thereof.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 25 wherein said synthetic auxin is indole-3-butyric acid.

28. (Currently Amended) A method for controlling the growth of *Fusarium* and *Rhizoctonia* organisms on dry bean plants, comprising:

applying a principal fungi-inhibitor and a metal to seed beans for said plants prior to planting, said principal fungi-inhibitor an aqueous solution including a fungi-inhibiting component consisting of at least one plant hormone, said at least one plant hormone including an auxin, together with a said metal selected from the group consisting of calcium, zinc, copper, manganese and mixtures thereof, said auxin applied in an amount effective to inhibit the growth of said organisms on and in tissues of said plants but wherein said amount is insufficient to negatively effect growth of tissues of said plants.

29. (Original) The method of Claim 28 wherein said auxin is indole-3-acetic acid.

30. (Original) The method of Claim 29 wherein said auxin is applied at a rate of about 0.0028 to about 0.28 gm auxin/100 kg seed weight.

31. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 30 wherein said auxin principal fungi-inhibitor and said metal are applied by spraying said seeds with an aqueous solution of said auxin principal fungi-inhibitor and said metal.

32. (Cancelled)

33. (Currently Amended) A method for inhibiting the an infestation of plants by insects and larvae of said insects, comprising:

applying an insect-inhibitor and a metal to the seeds or tubers of a plant said plants prior to planting, or to the roots, foliage, flowers or fruit of said plants after planting, said insect-inhibitor an aqueous solution including an insect inhibiting component consisting of at least one plant hormone, said at least one plant hormone including an auxin, together with a said metal selected from the group consisting of alkaline earth metals, transition metals and mixtures thereof, said auxin applied in an amount effective to inhibit infestation by said insects and larvae but wherein said amount is insufficient to negatively effect growth of tissues of said plants.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 33 wherein said auxin is selected from the group consisting of natural auxins, synthetic auxins and mixtures thereof.

35. (Original) The method of Claim 34 wherein said auxin is a natural auxin.

36. (Original) The method of Claim 35 wherein said natural auxin is indole-3-acetic acid.

37. (Original) The method of Claim 34 wherein said auxin is a synthetic auxin.

38. (Original) The method of Claim 37 wherein said synthetic auxin is selected from the group consisting of indole propionic acid, indole-3-butyric acid, phenyl acetic acid, naphthalene acetic acid (NAA), 2,4-dichlorophenoxy acetic acid, 4-chloroindole-3-acetic acid,

2,4,5-trichlorophenoxy acetic acid, 2-methyl-4-chlorophenoxy acetic acid, 2,3,6-trichlorobenzoic acid, 2,4,6-trichlorobenzoic acid, 4-amino-3,4,5-trichloropicolinic acid and mixtures thereof.

39. (Original) The method of Claim 38 wherein said synthetic auxin is indole-3-butyrlic acid.

40. (Original) The method of Claim 34 wherein said auxin is applied at a rate exceeding about 0.0002 gm auxin/hectare/day.

41. (Original) The method of Claim 40 wherein said auxin is applied at a rate of about 0.0002 to about 0.06 gm auxin/hectare/day.

42. (Original) The method of Claim 41 wherein said auxin is applied at a rate of about 0.002 to about 0.01 gm auxin/hectare/day.

43. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 34 wherein said auxin is insect-inhibitor and said metal are applied to said roots, foliage, flowers or fruit as a dry powder or as an aqueous solution.

44. (Cancelled)

45. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 43 wherein said auxin is insect-inhibitor and said metal are applied as an aqueous solution by drip irrigation or by spray application.

46. (Cancelled)

47. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 34 wherein said metal is selected from the group consisting of calcium, zinc, copper, manganese and mixtures thereof.

48. (Original) The method of Claim 34 wherein said insects are selected from the group consisting of sucking insects, chewing insects and mixtures thereof.

49. (Original) The method of Claim 48 wherein said sucking insects are selected from the group consisting of mites, aphids, thrips, white fly, leaf hoppers, flea hoppers, scaling insects and mixtures thereof and said chewing insects are selected from the group consisting of *Lepidoptera*, *Helidoceras* and mixtures thereof.

50. (Original) The method of Claim 34 wherein said plants are crop plants selected from the group consisting of dry beans, soybeans, onions, corn, cotton, potatoes and mixtures thereof.

51. (Currently Amended) A method for inhibiting the an infestation of plants by pests, including insects and larvae of said insects, comprising:

manipulating the level of auxin in plant tissues of said plants by applying an insect-inhibitor and a metal, to seeds or tubers for a plant said plants prior to planting or to roots, foliage, flowers or fruit of a plant said plants after planting, an aqueous solution including an insect-inhibiting component consisting of said insect-inhibitor being at least one plant hormone, said at least one plant hormone including a synthetic auxin, together with a said metal selected from the group consisting of alkaline earth metals, transition metals and mixtures thereof, said auxin applied in an amount effective to adjust the auxin in said plant tissues to a level sufficient to inhibit growth of harmful organisms causing said disease infestation by said pests but wherein said level is insufficient to negatively effect growth of said plant tissues.

52. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 51 wherein said synthetic auxin is selected from the group consisting of indole propionic acid, indole-3-butyric acid, phenyl acetic acid, naphthalene acetic acid (NAA), 2,4-dichlorophenoxy acetic acid, 4-chloroindole-3-acetic acid, 2,4,5-trichlorophenoxy acetic acid, 2-methyl-4-chlorophenoxy acetic acid, 2,3,6-

trichlorobenzoic acid, 2,4,6-trichlorobenzoic acid, 4-amino-3,4,5-trichloropicolinic acid and mixtures thereof.

53. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 51 wherein said synthetic auxin is indole-3-butryic acid.

54. (Currently Amended) A method for inhibiting the an infestation of onion plants by thrips and larvae of said thrips, comprising:

applying a thrip-inhibitor and a metal to the foliage of said onion plants, said thrip-inhibitor an aqueous solution including a thrip-inhibiting component consisting of at least one plant hormone, said at least one plant hormone including an auxin comprising indole-3-butryic acid, together with a said metal selected from the group consisting of alkaline earth metals, transition metals and mixtures thereof, said auxin applied in an amount effective to inhibit infestation by said thrips and larvae but wherein said amount is insufficient to negatively effect growth of tissues of said plants.

55. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 54 wherein said auxin further comprises indole-3-acetic acid.

56. (Original) The method of Claim 55 wherein said auxin is applied at a rate of about 0.0002 to about 0.06 gm auxin/hectare/day.

57. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 54 wherein said auxin is thrip-inhibitor and said metal are applied as an aqueous solution by spray application to said foliage.

58. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 57 wherein said solution further comprises a metal is selected from the group consisting of calcium, zinc, copper, manganese and mixtures thereof.

59. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 54 wherein said auxin is thrip-inhibitor and said metal are applied by dusting with a dry powder including said auxin thrip-inhibitor and said metal.

60. (Currently Amended) A seed or seed piece for producing plants having enhanced resistance to fungi, comprising:

a plant seed or seed piece; and

a plant hormone including an auxin selected from the group consisting of natural auxins, synthetic auxins and mixtures thereof, together with a metal selected from the group consisting of alkaline earth metals, transition metals and mixtures thereof, said auxin plant hormone dispersed on the surface of said seed or seed piece from an aqueous solution including as a principal fungi-inhibitor fungi-inhibiting component consisting of said auxin, said auxin present on said plant seed or seed piece in an amount effective to inhibit fungi growth in or on tissues of said plant of harmful organisms causing said disease but wherein said amount is insufficient to negatively effect growth of said plant tissues.

61. (Previously Presented) The seed or seed piece of Claim 60 wherein said auxin is indole-3-butryric acid.

62. (Previously Presented) The seed or seed piece of Claim 60 wherein said auxin is indole-3-acetic acid.

63. (Currently Amended) The seed or seed piece of Claim 64 60 wherein said auxin is present in an amount of about 0.0028 to about 0.028 gm auxin/100 kg seed weight.

64. (Currently Amended) The seed or seed piece of Claim 64 60 wherein said seed is a bean seed and said auxin is present in an amount from about 0.0028 to about 0.028 gm auxin/100 kg seed weight.

65. (Currently Amended) The seed or seed piece of Claim 64 60 wherein said seed piece is a potato seed piece and said auxin is present in an amount which results in about 0.0125 to about 2.8 gm auxin/hectare of planted seed pieces.

66. (Currently Amended) The seed or seed piece of Claim 64 60 wherein said fungi are selected from the group consisting of the *Fusarium*, *Rhizoctonia*, *Pythium* and *Phytophthora* families and mixtures thereof.

67. (Currently Amended) The seed or seed piece of Claim 64 60 wherein said plants are crop plants selected from the group consisting of dry deans beans, soybeans, onions, corn, cotton, potatoes and mixtures thereof.

68. (Currently Amended) A seed or seed piece for producing plants having enhanced resistance to fungi, comprising:

a plant seed or seed piece; and

a plant hormone including an auxin selected from the group consisting of indole-3-butryic acid, indole-3-acetic acid and mixtures thereof, together with a metal selected from the group consisting of alkaline earth metals, transition metals and mixtures thereof, said auxin plant hormone dispersed on the surface of said seed or seed piece from an aqueous solution including as a principal fungi-inhibitor fungi-inhibiting component consisting of said auxin, said auxin present on said plant seed or seed piece in an amount effective to inhibit growth of said fungi but wherein said amount is insufficient to negatively effect growth of said plant.

69. (Currently Amended) The seed or seed piece of Claim 68 wherein said plant hormone further includes comprising dispersed on the surface of said seed or seed piece at least one of a cytokinin, a gibberellic acid and precursors and mixtures thereof: dispersed on said surface of said seed or seed piece.

70. (Previously Presented) The seed or seed piece of Claim 69 wherein said auxin comprises both indole-3-butyric acid and indole-3-acetic acid.

71. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein said principal fungi-inhibitor and said metal are applied as an aqueous solution.

72. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein said principal fungi-inhibitor and said metal are applied as a dry powder.

73. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein said principal fungi-inhibitor and said metal are applied to the seeds, tubers or roots of said plant in an encapsulated form to provide for slow release of said auxin.

74. (New) The method of claim 73 wherein said principal fungi-inhibitor and said metal are encapsulated in a biologically compatible material providing slow release of said auxin, said material selected from the group consisting of clays, lignites, resins, silicones, and mixtures thereof.

75. (New) The method of claim 43 wherein said insect-inhibitor and said metal are applied by dusting with said dry powder.